

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6906

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, AR

SUBJECT: PACKAGE BOMBS (FLOWERS/PEN & PENCILS)

A/SY PASS TO AMBASSADOR HILL

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5609

1. ON AUGUST 30, MR. ANTHONY H. POHL, MANAGER OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING, IBM, FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING TO RSO BECKETT. ON AUGUST 26, AT 10:55 A.M. AN APPARENT MESSENGER APPROACHED THE HOUSE OF BENITO ESMERONI, RETIRED GENERAL MANAGER OF IBM ARGENTINA, AND CURRENTLY CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. ESMERONI AND HIS HOUSEHOLD HAVE RECEIVED THREATS OVER THE PAST 5-6 YEARS AND THEREFORE HAVE SPECIFIC PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED CONCERNING THE DELIVERY OF PACKAGES AT THE HOME. HOWEVER, THIS PROCEDURE BROKE DOWN AS DESCRIBED HEREWITH.

2. THE MESSENGER, WHO WAS WEARING AN OLIVE DRAB SHIRT AND BLUE TROUSERS, PRESENTED A SEE-THROUGH PLASTIC FLOWER BOX CONTAINING AN ORCHID. A SMALL BOX COMMONLY USED FOR A POPULAR PEN AND PENCIL SET BEING SOLD IN ARGENTINA WAS PRESENTED ALONG WITH THE FLOWERE. THE GUARD ASKED THE MESSENGER TO IDENTIFY THE SENDER AND WAS INFORMED THAT IT WAS A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY. (NOTE: GUARDS ARE UNDER STANDING INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO ACCEPT ANY PACKAGES BUT TO MAKE INQUIRY INSIDE OF THE HOUSE OF A FAMILY MEMBER CONCERNING EXPECTED GIFTS.) ON THE BOX CONTAINING

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THE ORCHID WAS A CARD FROM A FLOWERE SHOP. THE SMALLER BOX HAD

A LABEL ADDRESSING THE ITEM TO MR. ESMERONI. THE GUARD ENTERED THE HOUSE CARRYING THE PACKAGES TO MRS. ESMERONI WHO ASKED HIM THE IDENTIFY OF THE SENDER. THE MAID WAS SENT FROM THE HOUSE TO CHECK WITH THE MESSENGER IN AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE IDENTITY OF THE SENDER BUT THE MESSENGER HAD DEPARTED. BOTH PACKAGES WERE PLACED ON A TABLE. CHRISTINA ESMERONI, 30 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER OF BENITO ESMERONI, WAS INSTRUCTED BY HER MOTHER NOT TO TOUCH THE PACKAGES. THE DAUGHTER REPLIED THAT SHE WOULD BE CAREFUL AND PLACED THE PACKAGE, CONTAINING THE PEN AND PENCIL, ON TOP OF THE TV SET. SHE STOOD AWAY FROM THE PACKAGE AND OPENED THE LID. THE FOLLOWING EXPLOSION BLEW OFF HER LEFT HAND. SHE HAS REMAINING ON HER RIGHT HAND THUMB AND LITTLE FINGER. SHE RECEIVED CHEST AND FACIAL INJURIES.

3. IT WAS THE OPINION OF MR. POHL, WHO EXAMINED THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION, THAT THE BLASTING CAPACITY OF THE BOMB WAS SUFFICIENT TO KILL AND THAT THE PACKAGE HAD BEEN ASSEMBLED BY A PERSON WITH PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN THE USE OF EXPLOSIVES. ACCORDING TO A STUDY OF THE PATH OF THE BLAST, IT APPEARED THAT THE CONTAINER WAS SHAPED TO CAUSE THE BLAST TO CREATE MAXIMUM FORCE UPWARD FROM THE TOP. MARKS OF THE BLAST ALONG WITH SKIN TISSUE FROM THE VICTIM WERE ON THE CEILING OF THE ROOM IN WHICH THE PACKAGE WAS OPENED. (AVERAGE CEILINGS IN BUENOS AIRES ARE 12 FEET OR MORE.) MR. POHL WAS ALSO OF THE OPINION THAT SHOULD AN INDIVIDUAL HAVE BEEN LEANING OVER THE DEVICE AS OPPOSED TO EXAMINING IT FROM ARM'S LENGTH, THE DEVICE HAD ADEQUATE FORCE TO KILL.

4. RSO COMMENT: ON AUGUST 26, 5 MORE INCIDENTS SIMILAR TO THE ONE ABOVE OCCURRED, ONE AT A PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND REMAINING 4 AT FACTORY OFFICES: A) 10 A.M. TWO PACKAGES WERE RECEIVED BY MARCEL CAPDEVILA, COMPANY DIRECTOR AND BOARD MEMBER OF ASTARA (RENAULT ARGENTINA). HE RECEIVED INJURIES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF CHRISTINA ESMERONI. B) 1300 HOURS SIMILAR PACKAGES DELIVERED TO PERSONNEL MANAGER OF FORD SUBSIDIARY. HE LOST BOTH HANDS. C) 1400 HOURS, PERSONNEL DIRECTOR FORD MOTOR COMPANY RECEIVED SIMILAR PACKAGES. HAVING BEEN WARNED BY THE SUBSIDIARY, HE WAS SUSPICIOUS AND THE ITEMS WERE TURNED OVER TO SECURITY REPS. PACKAGES WERE DETONATED IN THE PLANT BACKYARD, CAUSING ONE METER CRATER. D) PERSONNEL MANAGER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF GENERAL MOTORS ALSO RECEIVED PACKAGES, TURNED THEM OVER TO SECURITY PERSONNEL AND THEY WERE DETONATED WITHOUT INJURY. E) PERSONNEL MANAGER OF SQUIBB LABS. RECEIVED THE PACKAGES AND CALLED POLICE EOD TEAM. MEMBER OF EOD TEAM, IN ATTEMPTING TO NEUTRALIZE THE PACKAGE, LOST THREE FINGERS.

5. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY THAT THIS COULD BE THE START OF A CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AGAINST U.S. INDUSTRY. IT SHOULD BE NOTED

THAT IN THE 6 BOMGING INCIDENTS, FOUR WERE DIRECTED AGAINST
PERSONNEL MANAGERS, ALL OF WHICH ARE LOCATED AT U.S. PLANTS.
ON JANUARY 29, 1976, TERRORISTS ENTERED OFFICES OF BENDIX AND,
AFTER FINDING THE GENERAL MANAGER NOT PRESENT, MURDERED THE
PERSONNEL MANAGER AND MANAGER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (B.A.
0633).
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